

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 4-6, 8, 9, and 32-37 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but indicated that claims 4-6, 8, 9, and 32-37 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner rejected claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite; rejected claims 1-3, 7, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,394,389 to Kremer ("Kremer"); rejected claims 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being unpatentable over Kremer in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,867,494 to Krishnaswamy et al. ("Krishnaswamy"); rejected claims 12-14 and 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being unpatentable over Kremer in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,781,535 to Russ et al. ("Russ"); and rejected claim 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being unpatentable over Kremer.¹ Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's objection and rejections under § 102, § 103, and § 112.

By this Amendment, Applicants rewrite claims 4-6, 8, 9, and 32-37 in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants cancel claims 1-3, 7, and 10-31 without any prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter thereof. Claims 4-6, 8, 9, and 32-37 are currently pending.

Regarding claim objections

Applicants thank the Examiner for pointing out the allowable subject matter in claims 4-6, 8, 9, and 32-37. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's objection to

¹ The Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

claims 4-6, 8, 9, and 32-37 as being dependent upon a rejected base claims. However, to expedite the prosecution of this application, Applicants have rewritten claims 4-6 in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claims 2 and 3; rewritten claims 8 and 9 in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claims 2 and 7, and rewritten claims 32-37 in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 31, as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, claims 4-6, 8, 9, and 32-37 are allowable over the prior art of record. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to claims 4-6, 8, 9, and 32-37 and the timely allowance of this application.

Regarding claim rejections

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; rejection of claims 1-3, 7, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kremer; rejection of claims 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kremer in view of Krishnaswamy; rejection of claims 12-14 and 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kremer in view of Russ; and rejection of claim 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kremer. However, to expedite the prosecution of this application, Applicants have canceled claims 1-3, 7, 10-18, and 31. The Section 112 rejection of claim 16, the Section 102 rejection of claims 1-3, 7, and 15, and the Section 103 rejections of claims 10-14, 16-18, and 31 are therefore moot.

Conclusion

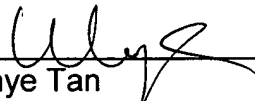
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request entry of this Amendment and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: April 10, 2006

By: 
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